



## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

### Fall 2008

On behalf of the Florida Sterling Council, I would like to recognize our accomplishments thus far in the 2008-2009 Sterling year. We have just completed another Examiner training cycle and have deployed the Governor's Sterling Award teams. We will begin deploying the Sterling Challenge assessment teams in January 2009. In addition, we are launching one of our most exciting new initiatives: the Sterling Small Business Blueprint. This process involves specialized tools to help small businesses weather the economic recession and develop management approaches to help them sustain their businesses and continue to grow during this very difficult economic downturn. We are excited about this new tool specifically targeted to help Florida's small business community.

In late October and early November, the Sterling volunteer Examination Committee planned and delivered two weeks of training. This year, over 60 Examiners participated in the Leadership Training which continues to grow each year as new leaders are brought into this process. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Barbara Barnhouse who led the Leadership Training process. I would also like to recognize the Examination Committee facilitators who again for their second year led the Three-Day Trainings – Michael Carroll, Phil Centonze, Lynne Drawdy, Dave Klater, Bob Madeiros, and Chris Wehrenberg. Thanks to these individuals, as well as the other members of the Examination Committee, we have experienced a renewed focus and intensity from our volunteers that has helped us prepare for the 2009 assessment cycle.

Over the next six months, approximately 20 Examination Teams will work to complete the Sterling assessment process. This will culminate with the recognition of our Examiners and Applicants at the Governor's Sterling Award Banquet on Friday, May 29, 2009 during Sterling's 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference.

During the months of October and November, our five 2008 Governor's Sterling Award recipients held their Great Practice Showcases, with over 500 people attending these events. It was gratifying to see so many new organizations attending to learn more about how the Sterling Management System can benefit them. This is especially relevant during this economic recession as organizations are struggling with basic issues of sustainability and survival. It shows that Sterling can offer viable help during these trying times.

Themed "Sterling – The Competitive Advantage," this year's conference has generated many new sessions and topics on how to maximize your competitive edge. Whether you are searching for ways to capitalize efficiency, focus on customer retention, or differentiate your service, the 2009 Conference will provide you with the tools and techniques to make this happen. I truly hope that you will be able to join us in Orlando, Florida for this annual event.

During this time of year, more than ever, we extend our best wishes for every happiness this holiday season and through the coming year. Sterling could not survive without the support of our many committed volunteers. We truly appreciate your time, dedication, and all that you provide for Sterling. Thank you.

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,

John A. Pieno, Chairman  
Florida Sterling Council